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FOR EUR/NB -- KATHERINE GARRY

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SUBJECT: ESTONIA PARTICIPATES IN GEORGIAN MISSILE
INVESTIGATION

REF: TBLISI 1993

11. (U) Along with France and the UK, Estonia will participate in the international team investigating the missile incident in Georgia (reftel). Estonia's contribution includes two experts: a radar expert and the Estonian Defense Attach to the U.S., Brigadier General Vello Loemaa. In his August 16 announcement of Estonian participation, Foreign Minister Urmas Paet said Estonia would assist Georgia to "find the culprits." FM Paet has also raised the Georgian missile incident at the Nordic and Baltic Foreign Ministers Meeting (September 16-17).

12. (SBU) On August 15, we met with Arti Hilpus, MFA Director for Security and Arms Control. Hilpus called the missile incident "outrageous" and fully "deplored who was behind it." The MFA continues to argue that the investigation be conducted under aegis of, or in participation with, a respected international organization to give it more credibility. While Hilpus expressed disappointment that more EU countries have not stepped up to support Georgia and/or participate in the investigation, he assured us that the Government of Estonia (GOE) is fully committed to aiding Georgia.

13. (SBU) Despite Parliament being closed for the summer, the Estonia-Georgia parliamentary group (with 27 Members of Parliament) met on April 13 and called on the GOE to offer Estonia's full support to the Government of Georgia. In an August 17 discussion, Andres Herkel, MP and chairman of the group, told us that the GOE's support for Georgia enjoys strong cross-party support in his group and within the Parliament. Herkel said that even though Moscow's complicity in the incident has not been confirmed, Europe and the international community "must not appear uninterested or lukewarm about what has happened because this would only add to the instability in the region." Herkel said that his group is in close and regular contact with its Georgian parliamentary counterparts and the Estonian MFA in order to monitor the situation.

PHILLIPS